

DDA 76-4198

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy to the DCI for the Intelligence  
Community

FROM : John F. Blake  
Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT : Assessment of Impact of Recent Events  
on U.S. Intelligence

REFERENCE : Your note dated 16 August 1976, same  
subject

I have reviewed referenced study and can only second the opinions of others that it is indeed a very good collation and summary of the impact that has been made on the effectiveness of the U.S. intelligence effort by the events of the last two years. There are, however, two specific comments that I would like to make. They are:

a. I am very pleased to note from my review of the paper that an objective official who is not involved in the day-to-day response to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act has focused on this subject in the manner reflected in paragraph 3 on page 12. The point made in this part of the memorandum -- namely, that our extreme FOIA/Privacy problems result not primarily from the laws themselves but rather from the fact that they are a tool that can be used and abused in connection with revelations made through other sources -- is an extremely significant point on which few people have focused.

There is abroad in the Agency, at the moment, a feeling that FOIA and Privacy are primary enemies of our mission, and that they should be fought on that basis. I do not believe this is the case. Had not circumstances and, quite frankly, our past behavior caused the Congressional and Executive investigations of the Agency, the effective dates of both the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act would have passed with barely a ripple within the Agency. I feel strongly that these two laws are reflective of the will of the people of our country and that opposition to what they

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represent must be based on solid and provable concepts of national security. Our experience with the laws has demonstrated to my satisfaction that we can protect secrets which truly warrant protection. I do not subscribe to those statements which characterize FOIA and Privacy as major threats to this Agency's ability for continued effective performance. Let us be frank and honest with ourselves. What [redacted] has pointed out in his memorandum is absolutely correct. The unexpected heavy costs of responding to numerous FOIA requests with which we have agonized are, indeed, a direct result of other revelations which have stimulated the public to utilize the channels that these new laws afford. Were it not for the questionable activities, which in turn stimulated the investigations, which in turn titillated the public, I am convinced that this Agency could live comfortably with the requirements posed by these two laws. It is quite fashionable at the moment to blame these laws for our troubles. However, once again being honest with ourselves, the facts state that these laws have primarily caused us administrative burdens and high costs as regards implementation. They have not been a significant source for revelation of CIA secrets which, in all honesty, warrant protection.

b. As stated earlier, the referenced paper is a fine presentation of the effect that revelations have had on our activities. I would only urge that in further utilization of this paper all concerned bear in mind the extent to which it confirms that we have been damaged. I do not believe that it would serve the best interests of our country to have the totality of this damage placed in the public domain.

John F. Blake

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